Leicester, Massachusetts,
August 31. 1852.

Dear Mr. Estlin,

I am in your debt in the letter way, - a debt I do not expect to wipe off easily, and I am never sorry when it is increased. - It seems very long since I wrote to you, and the topics for our correspondence are numerous and weighty. I have sometimes kept brief memoranda of my letters to you, but I did not of the last or of its date. I think however it was just after the Whig National Convention at Baltimore, which so signally (I was about to say) annihilated Daniel Webster, put aside Millard Fillmore as a poor tool no longer needed for the dirty work for which it had been used, and made Winfield Scott, a rather silly, "conceited talking," General, their Presidential candidate. - I have just been reading the first half of a recent speech of Horace Mann's in Congress. It is exceedingly interesting and able, & quite bold. I wish I had it entire, that I might mail it to you by this Steamer. It will repay you for reading, however busy it may find you. - Our Senator Sumner, I fear, has made but a poor affair of his long-delayed & long-promised A. S. speech. We have not yet had it in full, but a considerably-extended telegraphic report, which we have had, would lead one to think it heavy, a repetition of old thoughts and ideas, a sort of duty-speech rather than one fresh & earnest from the soul. His partisans cry up both it & him very much; but that is

a matter of course, especially ~~in these~~ at this time when the elections are so near at hand. Mr. Sumner's speech was prefaced with a motion to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law, not made as a separate & independent proposition, but as a mere appendage and amendment to the Appropriation Bills. It is very note-worthy that only four Senators, out of fifty two or fifty four, voted for Mr. Sumners' amendt. viz. Messrs. Chase & Wade (the Ohio senators), John P. Hale, of N. Hampshire, the Presidential Candidate of the "Free Democratic (late Free Soil) Party," and Mr. Sumner himself. Even Mr. Seward avoided the vote. So the two great parties, with almost entire unanimity, so far as their public men go, are resolved to retain & maintain the Fugitive Slave Law! - The Free Democracy are making a great stir, & profess to be in high hopes of party progress; but, I think, they will have a smaller vote than was thrown, 4 years ago, for Mr. Van Buren. He did not get a majority, nor even a plurality, in a single State. Much less can it be expected for Mr. Hale. - Meantime we "infidel" Abolitionists, who belong to no political party, and only want to have the right prevail, justice be done, and God's laws be honoured in preference to the Slavetraders', are doing what we can to show up the iniquity of these parties, and the cold and guilty heartlessness of the churches of the land. What are we against so many? is my continual thought & inquiry. If we had not God and the Right on our side, we should indeed be the extremest fools and madmen the world ever saw, to occupy our present position one hour, or even to have taken it,

On the 30th June, I received through Jas. Munroe & Co. yours dated in London, 22 Cecil St., June 8th; also, sundry documents put out by, & on account of, E. Matthews - copies of the Statement published by the Bristol and Clifton Antislavery Society — Mrs. Greer's book, &c. for all of which, jointly & severally, I thank you and your daughter most cordially. I have also, more recently, rec.d your note of July 16. from Dublin, with a copy of the Illustrated News, illustrating our friend G. Thompson's defeat; for which also, please accept my best thanks. — What travellers you have become, for the cause's sake! I shall not despair of seeing you in America yet. —

I was very glad to hear of your proposed monthly paper; only I hope you are not about to overwork yourself in regard to it. What can I do towards getting ~~you~~ a list of subscribers for it here? If you will tell me whether you would like to have me do this, and what the Annual charge will be, including the postage you must prepay, I will do what I can to get you some readers on this side. I begin to feel quite impatient to see your first number. — I do not just understand what it is that E. Matthews has done, which gives J. Scoble any advantage over him. From your note, I should not judge it to be anything very momentous, but from some other source, I have now forgotten what, I have got the impression that it was ~~greatly~~ magnified into a great offence. — I wonder who the London Correspondent of the "Standard" is! A letter from such a person, (either a Bostonian or some one familiar in B.,)

appears in last "Standard". He (or she) refers to Scoble being about to embark immediately for America, and mentions his total neglect of Wm. & Ellen Craft, as a thing which ought to be made known in this country & especially in Canada, as illustrating his want of fitness for the post he is about taking. I suspect Scoble will ride roughshod over the Canada people, both the whites and the refugees. I don't know who there is there, to watch and expose him. Hiram Wilson is altogether too meek Scoble. I fancy, would frighten him half to death in half an hour. Then the Ministers & Church office bearers, who have got up the Canada Anti Slavery Society, will probably be very ready to fall in with his bigotries, & will soon be inoculated with the poison of his enmity to the American A. S. Society & its friends.

Speaking of the Crafts - I knew not whether to be glad or sorry at what you told me of the prospect of an increase of their family. I fear it will interfere sadly with her duties and pursuits at the Ockham School. Since I have commenced writing this letter, I have received to-days "Commonwealth" from Boston, in which I saw the following paragraph, - & cut it out for your eye. A such rumour had come to me before, and I know not w the "Commonwealth" picked it up;

> A foolish paragraph is going the rounds, to effect that Ellen Crafts is anxious to return to owner, in Georgia.

I could not but feel very sorry for George Thomp He must be sadly disappointed & mortified. What will he do? We had a report here that he had been returned to Parliament, since his defeat in the Tower Hamlets, from the University of Aberdeen! This seems very unlikely; and it is doubtless some other person, wit the same or a similar name. - I do not quite percei

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on what grounds he was defeated, — rather, I do not feel sure which were the true grounds. I can hardly suppose that Scoble & his set, with all their malignity, could do much to affect such an election. — The Maynooth grant (was he in favour of it!) I can see would be used to his great injury among ignorant persons, and mere anti-papists. But I think it fair that the R. C. college should stand, with regard to government aid, on the same footing with other religious bodies & institutions; & I think G. T. would be pretty sure to take that view of it. On what grounds did Mr. Grant oppose him? I never saw any of his anti-Thompson articles. I suppose that his Constituency were really disappointed that G. T. made no more of a figure in Parliament. I think he might & ought to have done, & talked, more than he did. He might have made speeches which would have been valuable for general reading, if the members of Parliament refused to listen to them. — We see that a "freehold house", in the Tower Hamlets, has been given to him. Is it expected he will occupy it? — It will be a long time to Mr. T. to wait for another Parliament to be elected, —

I have read Mrs. Greer's book thoroughly. I cannot quite rid myself of the feeling that she has caricatured the Quaker body. And yet, with all allowance for that, it must be regarded as a sad & mournful developement of the state of things in that Society. I have long thought there was a good deal of humbug about the modern Quakers. The best of them, with us, are precisely those who are least wedded to their particular rules, and who are willing to break from them, when a good cause for so doing presents itself. I think it very evident that Mrs. Greer was persecuted by the Friends. She appears never to have submitted with entire docility to their discipline, ~~nor~~ and to have

always felt a religious want which the Society did not supply. She appears too to have felt the superiority of herself & her family, in point of good breeding & refinement, to nearly all other Friends with whom she associated, - and this feeling is one which cannot be easily disguised - (indeed the attempt to disguise it is not generally made by persons having it.), and I presume it was not disguised in her case. I was astonished at the charges she brings of immorality, &c. But she brings them very boldly, & re-iterates them; and it is true that a sound philosophy teaches, and experience confirms the lesson, that just in proportion as rigid conventional rules are enforced upon the young, and they are required to deny themselves the recreations and amusements which they see other young persons enjoying around them, is the danger that they will break away from all restraint afterwards, or clandestinely possess themselves of what they covet. — It was hardly credible that J.J. Gurney & Mrs. Fry would be so ill-mannered as she represents them to have been when in Ireland; and yet, what I saw of J.J. Gurney, when in this country, convinced me that he was pompous and conceited, and I can readily believe that he would afford great occasion for such a representation of him as Mrs. G. has given. — My wife thinks that there is a malignant spirit in the book. I cannot deny that it seems to be with a certain satisfaction that she dwells upon the shortcomings and backslidings of Friends, and especially of those connected with the families of ministers. &c. She has certainly succeeded in representing the Quakers in

an exceedingly absurd light, and as most surprisingly ignorant. But, making every proper abatement for the feelings & circumstances under which she writes, I think that she has made out a strong case of a most woful ~~defection~~ declension, on the part of Friends, from the positions & spirit of their Society, and that there is a most crying need of what she calls a shaking of the dry bones.

Mrs. Greer is not, herself, (to my mind) in a very attractive position religiously. She appears to me to be ~~exceedingly~~ sectarian in feeling, & narrow in her religious views. She condemns some things in the Quakers, which to me seem excellent, the lofty remnant remaining among them of the lofty and spiritual 'testimonies' of their founders. I refer to what she says (pp. 300, 301) & elsewhere, on the subjects of Hell, eternal burnings, and the reliance we may have on God's mercy and justice in His dealings with all, & what is necessary to acceptance with Him. On these points she is much more in the dark, I think, than those she condemns. —

I believe however that the book will be useful, was needed; — that it is needed here, — though I know no one religious denomination in the land, which I must confess, I think the Quakers would sain by entering. The spirit of sect, and the work it imposes on a man, is thoroughly slavish and detestable. It is the very quintessence of selfishness, and is anti-Christ itself — just as much in Quakerism as in Church of Englandism, or in Methodism, & just as much in Unitarianism as in either; though I think the Unitarians are in rather less danger of falling into it.

You will observe that I have tried to strike a sort of balance as to this book & its subjects. — I was impressed, frequently with a sense of exaggeration, and also (and increasingly so as I got on with the book) with the assurance that she had but too much foundation for her statements & charges. I endeavoured, in my mind, to come at the truth, which perhaps lies between her statements & those of her opponents. — As for that coarse old creature from America, I was astonished that any Friend abroad in this country should ever have sent such a boor as their representative. But one of her assailants admits pretty much all she said about him. — Her talk about the Bible seems to be that of Superstition, & idolatry almost, rather than of wholesome regard and true reverence. Her devout & implicit faith in the Church of England surprises me; and indeed appears almost ludicrous in one who professes to be casting off trammels & fetters which have been irksome to her spirit, & to be searching for something purer, and more intimately allied to pure religion. — I found the book to be certainly, as you said I should, highly amusing. I do not wonder the Quakers are extremely angry with her. Little or nothing, as yet, is known of the book here.

So Russell Carpenter is likely to have a wife, an anti-slavery wife. I am not surprised at her ceasing to help the American Society. I doubt if any form of anti-slavery long retains her interest, unless she has an unusual strong & independent mind, which I should not argue from the past.

As to F. Douglass, he is falling fast into a mere politician; certainly, so as to grieve those who have been his warmest admirers and friends; and is, I must think, rapidly losing the confidence of those who know him